THE GEORGIAN NEWSLETTER

LUGHNASADH 2008

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~SPOTLIGHT

Over the course of the year we have heard from the Elders and speaking for myself, I have enjoyed it a great deal. But, I figured, lets see what the young ones have to say. Here is a Pre-Dedicant

Sarasavati

(daughter of Lord Bel Taran)

GNL - When did you "discover" Paganism and Wicca. Tell us a little bit.

Sarasavati - I would have to say I discovered Wicca when I was about 2 years old, even though I grew up around the religion I didn't start learning anything about till then.

GNL - Who introduced you to the Georgians?

Sarasavati - My father introduced me to the Georgians when I first started my lessons.

GNL - Why did you decide to study the Georgian tradition?

Sarasavati – I think I decided to study the Georgian tradition mainly because it was the tradition I knew the most about. Not only that but I don't know anyone nearby who is of another tradition.

GNL - Do you think your ready for your 1st degree? Why?

Sarasavati – Yes and no, yes because I do know quite a bit more than someone of my age would know. And no mainly because even though I know enough for a first degree there is still more I can learn before becoming a first degree.

GNL - How long have you been interested in the craft?

Sarasavati – I've been interested in the craft for about 6 or 7 years when I actually started asking questions about the craft.

GNL - What are your plans for the future?

Sarasavati – Well right now my only plans are to graduate high school, attend a community college for a couple of semesters, get a B.A in medicine then join the NAVY and hopefully get a job as a combat medic.

GNL - Do you call any Georgians mom, dad, grandma or grandpa?

Sarasavati – Besides my dad, not really. No.

GNL - Describe your life a little these days, what great is going on?

Sarasavati – Well a little about my life is that I'm currently in high school and working. It's really fun have school and work because having a job forces me to make sure I do my homework because I can't get a work permit if I don't have at least a 2.0 GPA. And having a job gives me something to do.

GNL - Attended many Mt Meets? How was it? Discover anything about yourself there?

Sarasavati – I attended Mt. Meet last year in '07, it was cold in the morning, but really fun. I discovered that when I'm surrounded by nature I feel more at home. And that my totem animal is the buck or deer.

GNL - Any really good stories you fondly remember or shiver at the thought of these days you might wanna share with us?

Sarasavati – Last year when I was at Mt. Meet we did a howling for Beth who had passed away earlier in the year. I found out that I am actually quiet sensitive to the other world. I told the ones that needed to be thanked and that were loved by this person who passed. While we were doing the howl I felt a strange presents around me and I heard someone talking to me and I listened.

GNL - How do you feel about being painted blue and chased through the forest?

Sarasavati - I FEEL LIKE HIDING THE PAINT AND RUNNING TO THE BEAR CAVE!

GNL – Good luck with that daughter <veg>

ANNOUNCEMENTS!

Birthdays!!!!
Shawn – August 14
Allen - Sept 15
John (Tali) - September 20

Dedication:
Imbolc Moon Coven: Octavian on April 25, 2008 and Mari' on May 16, 2008 (yes, that is an apostrophe, and very important to Mari' because of the pronunciation- Mah-ree`) of the Imbolc Moon Coven in Hudson Florida. The Imbolc Moon hived off of the Samhain Moon and is lead by Rain and Rob, who are being gently guided by Lord Andrew…or Puck Shadowdrake as it were.

The Coven of the Children Between the Worlds: Linda Ballesteros dedicated back on November 30th 2006, Her partner, Kenneth Brinegar was dedicated on March 13th 2008 Also, Hope Atwell (Gydahlia) as asked to pick up her lessons once again after a considerable absence and we are going to be doing a "re-dedication" circle for her to give her sense of "refreshment" to the group

~1st degree
Loki of the ShadowDragon coven in Bakersfield REALY got his first degree on July 12.
~3rd degree

Gatherings
3rd annual Prairie Meet - October 5, 6, & 7, at Boiling Springs State park
POC - Anise AKA Sean - seanwwright@aol.com.

34rd annual Mountain Meet (1974 to now) - Aug 4nd - Aug 12th at the same place as last year, and the year before that and so on and so forth. The Methuselah Group Campsite in Mountain Home State Forest in California. **I will see you there!!!!**

Lammas
(July 31 and August 1)

Page 171 of "The Craft" by Dorothy Morrison

Related Deities: Ceres, Demeter, the Corn Mother, Lugh, John Barleycorn, the Green Man
Related Herbs: All herbs and all grains (corn, wheat, milo, rice, oats and so on) are sacred.
Related Stones: Tiger – eye, golden topaz, opal, citrine, ametrine.
Lammas – or Lughnasadh [loog' –na-sod] as it's sometimes called – marks the middle of summer and the beginning of the harvest season. We pay homage to the Sun, God Lugh, for his roll in the Earth's fruitfulness. We say goodbye as he wanes in the sky. This is not a time for sadness, however, for his seed lives in the Mother's womb. And the Mother is at her abundant best. The fruit of her labor is everywhere, and we gather to reap her bounty. Because of it's connection to the corn deities, many folk think that Lammas is just a grain harvest festival. But nothing could be further from the truth. Vegetables ripen and plump on the vine, begged to be picked. Onions and garlic await unearthing. Herbs – especially those specifically chosen for magical use – are at their most portent now. We've come of age, too, and the time of personal harvest is upon us. That being the case, it's not only important to reap the fruits of the Earth now, but as the Mother's children, to offer ourselves for harvest as well. By doing so, we will be chosen to carry on Her work in many forms and fashions. We know that this won't always be easy. But we also know that Mother will bless us many times over for the parts that we play, and that those blessings will always outweigh any effort that we put forth.
Lammas Circle Notes: Use a yellow or yellow orange altar cloth, and green, yellow or orange candles. Decorate with bunches of herbs, sheaves of grain, ears of corn and small baskets of fruit and vegetables. Burn Lammas incense (a mixture of frankincense and sunflower petals or heliotrope).

Cast Circle using the athame
Lammas Circle Ideas:

- Kindle a Lammas fire of herbs and wood to commemorate the Suns passing. Say goodbye to the sun by sating something like:

We thank you God of Sun and Light
For warming us from dawn 'til night
For fertilizing all the Earth
For brining us Your cheer and mirth
For laughter, joy, and shining ray
For guiding us along our way
And as you go, we hold you dear
Until the winter brings You near
And with the Yule You're born anew
Goodbye, dear Sun, we shall miss You

- Thank the Mother for Her bountiful gifts by blessing the onions, garlic, and grain staples in your kitchen (flour, cornmeal, oatmeal, and so on). Line them up on the altar or counter, place your hand over them, and say something like:

We thank You, Mother for these gifts
For meal and bulb and that which sifts
Please bless these items with your grace
And hold them dear within their space
So as we eat, Your blessings flow
Within, without – from head to toe

- Bake magical bread in celebration of the harvest. This doesn't have to be difficult or take all day. Just use frozen bread dough, and knead in a tablespoon or two of fresh herbs when it thaws. (Basil, oregano, dill, parsley, and chives are all good choices). As you eat the bread, say something like:

Circle of Life contain herein
Birth and death and birth again
Help me to understand my role
In life, and help me cleanse my soul
So I may walk this path with ease
As I will, so mote it be

- Make a corn dolly for next year's Imbolc. Just acquire three ears of corn and tie them together as directed in the Imbolc Celebration ideas. Bless the dolly by saying:

Seeds of life that burn and thrive
Seeds of plenty come alive
By Sun and Earth, this spell fulfill
Become now Bride, who melts the chill

Put the dolly in a safe place to await the Imbolc celebration

- Perform prosperity magic for the coming months by making a Witches' bottle. Just gather together a small bottle with a tight- fitting cork, a fish hook, some clover, a bit of cinnamon, and some coins. As you place the materials in the bottle, visualize money coming to you from all directions. Cork the bottle, and seal it with a bit of wax from the altar candles, then enchant it by saying something like:

Money come alive and grow
Pour down on me both high and low
By herb and hook and glass and coin
Prosperity and I now join
Paper money and coins that shine
Come to me, for you are mine

Bury the bottle near your front door. If that's not possible, set the bottle in a place where it won't be disturbed

Recipe

Bel's
Mt Meet Breakfast Burrito's

I started making these at Mt Meet many years ago, and a certain saber tooth mountain poodle will give her approval!

1 dozen eggs
1 lbs ground Jimmy Dean sausage
1 package O'Brien potatoes
1 lbs sharp cheddar cheese grated
16 oz Pace medium picante sauce
12 – 18 taco size flour tortillas

Scramble eggs, set aside. Crumble and brown sausage, set aside. Fry o'brien potatoes until light brown. Warm flour tortillas, I dry fry them on cast
iron. Now assemble burritos layer eggs, sausage, potatoes, cheese and salsa. Roll tightly and set aside. Repeat until all filling is used. They can be individually wrapped in foil and frozen. They can be reheated in microwave. They are best prepared fresh and eaten same day.

Sometimes Lammas or Lughnasadh brings out animal in us. Here we have Lisa Morgenstern summoning very naughty images in the minds of perverts everywhere!

"Ok here's the photo but it's a bit risqué. I thought I had a photo of me holding a bread man- this year we made a phallus for one of our gay coveners and I just could not resist the pictures. Naturally we had to take photos of him swallowing it as well.. But those are private.. Heh.."

That's ok Lisa, I for one appreciate this picture a great deal! <veg>

Here we have Loki and the incomparable Lady Du Dragcorum at Mt Meet last year…I believe it went something like this "Blessed be thy sacred tomb, without which" Yup, that was the phrase!

And here we have 2006 Lughnasadh (Lammas) ritual at Mt Meet, lead by Lady Karridwen. This is her actually being good….trust me, she's just like every other pagan woman I know and I have the picture to prove it!

Recipe

6. The Lammas Bannock

In Scotland, the first fruits were celebrated by the making of a 'bonnach lunastain' or Lunasdál bannock, or cake. In later times, the bannock was dedicated to Mary, whose feastday, La Feill Moire, falls on August 15th, two days later than the date of Lammas according to the old reckoning. A beautiful ceremony, which, no doubt, had pagan origins, attended the cutting of the grain (usually oats or bere.) In the early morning, the whole family, dressed in their best, went out to the fields to gather the grain for the 'Moilean Moire,' the 'fatling of Mary.' They laid the ears on a sunny rock to dry, husked them by hand, winnowed them in a fan, ground them in a quern, kneaded them on a sheepskin, and formed them into a bannock. A fire was kindled of rowan or another sacred wood to toast the bannock, then it was divided amongst the family, who sang a beautiful paean to Mother Mary while they circled the fire in a sunwise direction.
Here is a modern recipe you can try:

Pitcaithly Bannock

8 oz flour
4 oz butter
2 oz caster sugar
1oz chopped almonds
1oz mixed candied peel

Set oven to 325F/Gas 3. Grease a baking sheet. Sift the flour into a bowl. Add the sugar and butter and rub in to form a dough. Add the almonds and mix in the peel, making sure they are evenly distributed. Form into a thick round on a lightly floured surface and prick all over with a fork. Place on the sheet and bake for about 45-60 minutes. Allow to cool and serve sliced thinly and buttered.

Fires

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Fire-ravaged California is awaiting the arrival of foreign firefighters from as far away as Australia to help battle more than 300 blazes still raging across the western US state, officials said Saturday.

That's one of the headlines seen in local papers through out the Golden State.

Recently California has been plagued with fires, this causes an incredible amount of smoke in the air that causes health issues, hazy sky's and millions of dollars worth of damage to home owners…from one end of California to the other. Tangled up with the grief and despair that follows in the wake of the fires come some good things. Yes, I realize it's hard to remember the objective was to drain the swamp when your up to your ass in alligators, but there really are some positive things that come out of fires.

Forest fires not all bad, says forest researcher
by Stephen Forgacs
Staff writer

Forest fires that sweep the province after a long dry period play an important role in maintaining ecosystems and ensuring the survival of certain plants and animals, a UBC Forest Sciences professor says.
Each year, thousands of hectares of forest and grassland in the province go up in smoke. As of last week there were more than 500 forest fires burning in B.C.
But for generations of Canadians who grew up hearing the U.S. Forest Service's Smokey the Bear say forest fires were bad, television images of raging fires leave impressions of devastation.
"Smokey the Bear made people feel that fire was strictly the enemy of the forest. It killed animals, destroyed trees and plants, caused soil erosion, and fouled streams," says Assoc. Prof. Mike Feller. "Fire does have a negative impact, but it also has positive effects which are very much part of the natural ecological cycle."
Certain trees and plants rely on fire to provide conditions for germination while animals such as deer and elk thrive on the vegetation that grows on burned sites, Feller says.
Feller has studied the effects of forest fires for years, in particular their impact on nutrient cycles, but has delved into a range of other issues as well.
Both his and other researchers' findings suggest that, after years of adhering to a policy that directed efforts be made to fight every forest fire in the province, the B.C. Forest Service's move to a more selective approach to fighting fires makes sense in both dollars and ecology.
Feller says most North American jurisdictions now assess fires based on factors that include risk to human life, property, timber supply, recreation and wildlife. The weight that is placed on factors depends on regional economies as well.
"In the Canadian Arctic we expend resources fighting fires that threaten the habitat of fur-bearing animals, such as marten, to protect the local economy," he says.
Among the ecological factors that should be considered in forest management policies, says Feller, is the importance of early successional conditions, which occur in the period immediately after a forest fire when vegetation re-appears.
This period provides food for deer, moose and elk, which eat low-lying shrubs, grasses and flowers -- plants which disappear as the forest grows and prevents sunlight from reaching the ground.
"Without fire, you would have fewer early successional plants, and far fewer of these animals," says Feller.
Certain plants, such as the flower Corydalis sempervirens, will germinate only after being exposed to the heat of a fire and require strong sunlight to grow.
Trees, such as lodgepole and jack pine, also rely to a certain extent on the heat of fire to open their cones and permit germination.
Efforts to simulate natural disturbances such as fire through clearcutting and other forest management practices have met with only limited success, says Feller. He points out that forest fires tend to leave a natural mosaic of burned and unburned forest, and that even a severe forest fire, in which temperatures can reach 700 to 800 degrees Celsius, will leave some vertical trees that play a role as wildlife habitat.
Feller has also found that while nutrient loss from soils as a result of forest fires can have serious implications in some alpine regions in the interior of the province, nutrients in coastal regions are quickly replenished.
"Air pollution does wonders in replacing nutrient values lost by fires on the coast," he says.
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This was the setting sun on Midsummers day in Fairfield California during our ritual. The Gods were serious about this being a Fire Festival. No, the picture isn't doctored by photoshop…this is what we were looking at.

BB
Loye

Recipe

Brigid's Blackberry Pie

4 cups of fresh blackberries (thawed frozen berries are ok)
11/2 cups sugar
1/3 cup flour
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon of salt
1 unbaked pie crust

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Line a deep pie dish with the pie crust or purchase a commercially-made one. Set aside. Mix all other ingredients together in a large mixing bowl. If it appears too "wet," mix in a little more flour (about 2 tablespoons). Turn the fruit into the pie shell and dot with butter or margarine. You can bake the pie as is, or cover it with another pie crust. Then score the top several times with a sharp knife. Bake for 1 hour, or until the top crust is a golden brown. Taken from Edain McCoy's book "The Sabbats- A New Approach to Living the Old Ways"

I don't know bout you guys, but my mouth waters just thinking bout a good blackberry pie!

How to make a Corn Dolly

The best part of the stem is the top length from the ear (the seed head) down to where the last leaf leaves the stem. Leaving the ear intact, strip off the dead leaves and sort the stems according to size: thick, medium, and fine.

Dry straw must be soaked flat in cold water for about 15 minutes and then stood upright to drain before plaiting.

The Five-Straw Plait is the easiest to work with for a beginner:

1. Tie 5 straws together close to the ears.

2-5. Each time the straw being folded passes over two corners, it is then left and the one at the last corner is picked up and used in its place until the round is completed.

The attractive spiral pattern grows as round succeeds round.

6. When completed, the ends are tied to the starting point below the ears, making a decorative circle.

To feed in new straws, cut the old straw off after it has passed the second straw. The thin end of the new straw is inserted in the hole, making sure of a firm fit which is hidden under the fold of the straw of the next round.

Simple corn dollies can also be made with the standard three-straw plait.

More complex corn dollies involve multiple straws, intricate braids, and sometimes the creation of a straw core shape around which the outer straw is plaited.

John Barleycorn

There were three kings into the east,
Three kings both great and high,
An' they hae sworn solemn oath
John Barleycorn should die.

They took a plough and plough'd him down,
Put clods upon his head,
And they hae sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn was dead.

But the cheerfu' spring came kindly on,
And show'rs began to fall;
John Barleycorn got up again,
And sore surprised them all.

The sultry suns of summer came,
And he grew thick and strong,
His head weel arm'd wi' pointed spears,
That no-one should him wrong.

The sober autumn enter'd mild,
When he grew wan and pale;
His bending joints and drooping head
Show'd he began to fail.

His colour sicken'd more and more,
He faded into age;
And then his enemies began
To show their deadly rage.

They've ta'en a weapon long and sharp,
And cut him by the knee;
Then tied him fast upon a cart,
Like a rogue for forgerie.

They laid him down upon his back,
And cudgel'd him full sore;
They hung him up before the storm,
And turn'd him oe'r and o'er.

They filled up a darksome pit
With water to the brim;
They heaved in John Barleycorn,
There let him sink or swim.

They laid him out upon the floor,
To work him farther woe,
And still as signs of life appear'd
they tossed him to and fro.

They wasted, o'er a scorching flame,
The marrow of his bones;
But a miller us'd him worst of all,
For he crushed him between two stones.

And they had tae'n his very heart's blood,
And drunk it round and round;
And still the more and more they drank,
Their joy did more abound.

John Barleycorn was a hero bold,
Of noble enterprise
, For if you do but taste his blood,
'Twill make your courage rise.

'Twill make a man forget his woe;
'Twill heighten all his joy;
'Twill make a widow's heart to sing,
Tho the tear were in her eye

Then let us toast John Barleycorn,
Each man a glass in hand;
And may his great posterity
Ne'er fail in old Scotland!

Not exactly like the group Traffic's version, but fitting none the less.

The Lion
July 23 to August 22

Traditional
Leo Traits

Generous and warmhearted
Creative and enthusiastic
Broad-minded and expansive
Faithful and loving

On the dark side....

Pompous and patronizing
Bossy and interfering
Dogmatic and intolerant

The Leo type is the most dominant, spontaneously creative and extrovert of all the zodiacal characters. In grandeur of manner, splendor of bearing and magnanimity of personality, they are the monarch's among humans as the lion is king of beasts. They are ambitious, courageous, dominant, strong willed, positive, independent, self-confident there is no such a word as doubt in their vocabularies, and they are self-controlled. Born leaders, either in support of, or in revolt against, the *status quo*. They are at their most effective when in a position of command, their personal magnetism and innate courtesy of mind bringing out the best of loyalty from subordinates. They are uncomplicated, knowing exactly what they want and using all their energies, creativeness and resolution to get it, as well as being certain that they will get whatever they are after. Their followers know where they are with Leonians. Leonians think and act bigger than others would normally dare; the ambitiousness of their schemes and idealism sometimes daunt their followers, their practical hardheadedness and ability to go straight to the heart of any problem reassures those who depend on them. If Leonians meet with setbacks they thrive on the adversity.

On the whole they are powers for good, for they are strongly idealistic, humane, and beneficent. They have powerful intelligence and are of a broad philosophical, sometimes religious, turn of mind. Those who are devout may become very obstinate in upholding traditional beliefs and will cling tenaciously, but with complete sincerity, to practices and doctrines which liberal thinkers regard as absurdly out-of-date. These will be found as the 'lions' of industries, and in the forefront of the cutting edge of technologies.

Their faults can be as large in scale as their virtues, and an excessively negative Leonian can be one of the most unpleasant human beings imaginable, displaying extreme arrogance, autocratic pride, haughtiness, and excessive hastiness of temper. If jealously suspicious of rivals, they will not hesitate to use cunning, lies and trickery to discredit them. Self-centeredness, greed for flattery, boastfulness, and bombast, pomposity, snobbish superiority, and overbearing, and intolerant disdain of underlings; to whom they will nevertheless delegate the carrying out of minor details in their grandiose schemes, and from whom they are not above borrowing immoderately if an occasion necessitates it. Any of these can be characteristic of Leo.

Add to them a passion for luxury, a lust for power, unlimited sexual lust, and emotional indulgence, and a character emerges that no one would want to know either in public life or private. But their pride may go before a fall, as uncontrolled impetuosity is likely to bring them low. Fortunately it is rare that a Leo is so undisciplined as to give way thoroughly to this list of vices, and their tendencies to them are usually balanced by an innate wisdom. Those who are afflicted with them also have the intelligence it takes to consciously and actively overcome them.

In professional life they do well at any vocation at which there is room at the top. As politicians they are content with nothing less than a powerful position in government. In business they may be the chairman of their company's board, or at least directors or managers. They are excellent organizers and overseers, often laying the groundwork for new projects. If from the artisan ranks of society they will aspire to become the boss, partly because they are ambitious by nature, partly because they dislike manual labor, preferring to take charge of others doing it. If artistic, Leos can become stars of stage or screen (their bent is serious rather than light drama), maestros as musicians where they will gravitate toward the grand instruments or activities, such as the organ or conducting of orchestras and as painters; anything grand in conception and scale appeals to them. Leo women make exceptionally good welfare workers.

In his or her relations with others the Leo type is open, sincere, genuine and trusting. Outgoing, spontaneously warm hearted and plain spoken, though never lacking in kindliness, Leos are more disillusioned than the average if let down by those they trust. They are not good judges of character and are inclined to favoritism and an exaggerated faith in their followers which too often ends in disappointment. They have a strong sex drive and are so attracted to the opposite sex that they find it hard to be constant; they can be so intensely sexual as to become dissolute. They may have numerous love affairs for their love of pleasure and beauty is liable to drive them from one attractive partner to another. They are very much inclined to deceive. Their marriages may fail for the same reason, yet they are sincere and generous to their lovers while love lasts, and will remain attached to their homes so long as it is run for their benefit. They demand service but are incapable of giving it.

LIKES

- Speculative ventures
- Lavish Living
- Pageantry and Grandeur
- Children
- Drama

DISLIKES

- Doing things safely
- Ordinary, Day to day living
- Small minded people
- Penny pinching
- Mean spiritedness

PROBLEMS THAT MAY ARISE FOR YOU, AND THEIR SOLUTIONS

As with all sun signs, we all have unique traits to our personalities. When these traits are suppressed, or unrealized, problems will arise. However, with astrology we can examine the problem and assess the proper solution based on the sun sign characteristics. As a Leo you may see things below that really strike home. Try the solution, you most likely will be amazed at the results. If you find yourself on the receiving end of the negatives below, it is because you are failing to express the positive.

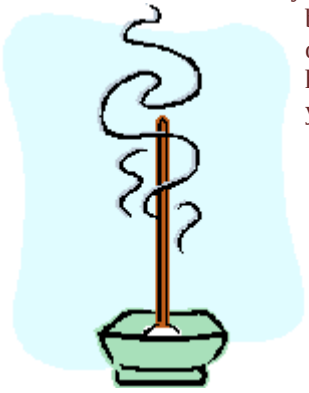
Problem: Getting all upset and angry with others when things do not go the way you fully expected them too. This kind of reaction to a problem is what causes a lot of marital discord and unhappiness.
Solution: You should never base all of your expectations on what you should get, but rather base them on what you can give to, or do, for those who are in your sphere of influence. You will find you have a more peaceful and happy home if you do this.

Problem: You are sometimes your own worst enemy, especially so when you are striving for attention in such obvious ways that you turn off the very people you sought to impress.
Solution: The first place to start is to stop trying to gain attention; give people the chance to notice the real you. Decide what it is that impresses you and you will then know what to do to impress others.

Problem: Egotism, to the extent that you may be the Leo who thinks no one is quite as good at things as you are and the people around you are made to feel small through your habit of comparison.

Solution: What the higher minded Leo has is a sense of self worth and of greatness, this is corrupted when you let the ego get out of hand so you should learn to walk tall by looking up to those that are 'taller' than you are.

Problem: Losses in income from unwisely speculating which leads to financial ruin, as well as possible personal losses of family and friends due to a lack of concern for their financial welfare.
Solution: You should always investigate all investments well before they are made, then talk it over with your spouse as to how hard the budget can be hit, before you spend the first dime.



Incense Making

Strengthen your connection to nature as soft clouds of frankincense, mastic, storax, sandalwood, cassia, juniper and lemon grass ascend to the heavens! Lets rediscover the ancient art of how to make incense.

Natural Incense Making

- determine the type of incense you'll make
- determine how you will heat your incense
- gather tools
- gather ingredients
- pulverize ingredients (or use powders)
- mix ingredients
- perhaps a drying or curing time
- heat ingredients

What "type" of incense will you make?

- **combustible incense** - used when forming your mixtures into cones or sticks by adding a binding material and a combustible material directly to the incense mixture (no reported explosions yet!). One end is lit, the flame then fanned out, allowing it to burn continuously by themselves. This incense is more difficult to make but easier to burn. Makes traveling with incense easy.
- **non-combustible incense** (incense of the ancients) - "loose incense" (just the ingredients themselves, after grinding and mixing) or "incense pellets" (loose incense where soft resins, balsams, raisins or dried fruits and honey have been added to form pea sized "pellets"). This incense is heated using charcoal, makko or on mica atop charcoal. This is the easiest method of mixing incense but requires just a few more steps and utensils to burn.

How will you heat your incense?

If you are making cones or sticks then burning your incense is straight forward and simple; you light one end of the cone or stick, fan out the flame and allow it to slowly burn of its own accord. Note: In some cultures it is considered disrespectful to all that is nature to "blow" out the flame.

If you are burning loose incense mixtures or incense pellets, then you'll need charcoal or makko to heat your mixtures.

If you are burning incense outdoors; individual ingredients, loose mixtures and incense pellets can be placed directly in a small campfire (best when there are just glowing coals remaining, no flame) or on a hot rock on the outer rim of a campfire, etc.

Incense burning vessel

- varies by the "type" of incense you will be burning

- **non-combustible incense** (loose ingredients or pellets): usually a cup, bowl or saucer shaped vessel filled with ash or sand is ideal (can be made of wood, metal or pottery). Large sea shells, such as abalone, work well too.
- **combustible incense** (cones, sticks, coils): again a cup, bowl, saucer or shell shaped vessel works well or one of the infinite number of specialty holders designed for this type of incense works great as well.

We encourage you to choose an incense burner that is handmade or perhaps even enjoy making one yourself. There is an energy to a handmade burner that cannot be put into words, it blends perfectly with the burning of natural incense. This "union" seems to be missing, even reversed with a mass produced incense burner.

Note: We have found that using a cup or bowl shaped incense burner filled with ash is the most versatile way to burn incense. It allows for every style of burning that we know of and the burning of every type of incense except coils, though with a little imagination one could probably work that out as well. The incense burner is most versatile when filled with ash (allows for burying charcoals koh doh style as well as using makko), the ash most often used is white rice ash. You can also use sand or pulverized lava rock in these incense burners as an alternative.

Styles of burning non-combustible incense

Lets look at three ancient methods for burning "loose incense" or "incense pellets":

- **Charcoal** - here we light a piece of bamboo charcoal (without saltpeter or other toxic chemical additives!) and set it in the center of our bowl filled with ash or sand. We sprinkle our incense mixture directly on top of the charcoal or right next to it. The charcoal heats the materials and releases their fragrance into the air. This has probably been the most common method of burning incense throughout history.

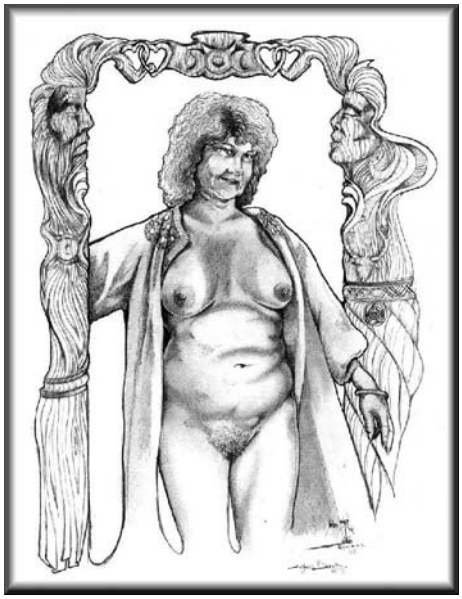
Makko - makko is a natural combustible material from the Tabu-no-ki tree, which grows in parts of Asia. It is a powdered material that burns slowly but with high heat. An indentation is made in the ash using an *ash press* then the trail is filled with makko powder and compacted slightly using the *ash press* again (any small form that will make a one way path in the makko makes a fine ash press).

WHEN PLANTS GO BAD!!

Photoshop….or real, you be the judge. If in fact real It would seem that Mother Nature is a horny old wench or is trying to tell us that not just the birds and bees do it <g>

Artwork

This particular picture is called "Forever", referring to the beauty of women even long after their youthful form has stepped aside for maturity.



This one is called "Fanart" and is near and dear to my heart…half naked women in armor with swords